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ABSTRACT

The development of interpersonal communication programs in Australia is occurring in difficult times for academic institutions, creating numerous problems. Some are concerned with teaching: stereotypical views of communication and communication educators, development of a theoretical framework for research, initial reaction by students against interpersonal communication, lack of program articulation with other disciplines, and domination of teaching resources by the U.S. Other problems are concerned with administration program development during budget cuts, declining staff morale, and development of local and international information networks. Opportunities for solving the problems are more evident in the teaching area than in the administrative area, because the latter covers a larger scope. The challenge is to bring them to the attention of those making budgetary decisions so that they are duly considered when decisions are made. (Author/MSE)

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INTERPERSONAL COMMUNICATION EDUCATION IN AUSTRALIA : PROBLEMS AND CHALLENGES FOR TEACHING AND ADMINISTRATION

Paper presented to Annual Conference of Australian Communication Association, Adelaide, May, 1980.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
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It is a healthy sign when professional colleagues sit down together and examine problems and challenges of mutual concern. When problems are shared they cease to be individual problems and become corporate problems. Corporate problems are more likely to be solved than individual problems, especially when they are analysed and attacked by members of a professional group with common interests. Our Australian Communication Association is such a professional group. If it achieves the objectives it is setting out for itself it will play a prominent role from now forward in identifying the problems facing interpersonal communication education in Australia and in taking up the challenges posed by them.

Because the task of this paper is to analyse problems, it risks painting a pessimistic view. At the outset let me say that this is not the intention, nor would such a view be justified, because I believe the future of communication education in Australia to be soundly based. Someone once said that the difference between an optimist and a pessimist is that the optimist describes his beer glass as half full while a pessimist describes the same glass as half empty. Let us look to the problems of communication studies and then look to the future with optimism. Our glass is half full.

The theme of this paper is that every problem contains within it the seeds of its own solution. Problems create challenges and challenges lead a profession forward. It is suggested that where problems exist the best approach is to search through them for opportunities.

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Opportunism is one way forward, especially in times of resource restraint. One of my colleagues and friends, a political scientist, recently described me as an opportunist. At first I was taken aback, probably by some of the negative connotations of the word. He went on to say that he did not see me as a manipulator, which I am pleased about because I do not regard myself as one and hope that I can pursue a professional career in communication education without becoming one or being perceived as one. His reference to opportunism was meant as a compliment: the inference was that searching problem situation for opportunities was a desirable academic pursuit and one which often led forward.

I want to use this idea as the basic structure of this paper. My objective will be to identify problems that face us in the teaching of communication and in the administration of communication studies departments and offer some suggestions for discussion afterwards about the challenges inherent in these problems and the opportunities for advancement of our profession that are offered by some of the potential solutions.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TEACHING

I believe that analysis of our efforts to introduce courses in interpersonal communication into Australia in recent years, whether through training programs in industry, or through coursework in tertiary institutions reveals a number of recurring problems related to teaching. These are identified and their challenges and opportunities explored.

1. Stereotyped views of communication - elocution, grouping, groping, and the interdisciplinary stigma

One of the things many of us engage our students in is examining the unfortunate effects of stereotyping in interpersonal relationships, hoping to alert them to the difficulties stereotyping creates so that they may strive to lessen its effects. It is ironic, then, that we, ourselves, suffer the effects of stereotyping.

We all know that "communication" evolved over a lengthy period of time and that the passage of that time saw long periods when rhetoric, public speaking, forensics, elocution, and debate reigned supreme to form a "tradition" for the discipline which we are still unable to shake free. Then came a reaction to this, a period with its T-groups, "touchy-feeling" communication, and the widely publicized excesses of the encounter group movement. Association with psychotherapy, often in a very amateur way, contributed to communication being perceived by many to have a therapeutic purpose - something to be sought as an intervention technique after only when interpersonal problems arose. Then, because the field that can lay claim to the title of communication is so eclectic, and because the word was trendy, others who specialized in offering work in such fields letter and report writing laid claim to the title, causing further confusion, and, worse, an image of academic dilution.

While there seems to be some implied status to a study claiming to be a discipline few of us would claim that communication is a discipline. At best it is an emerging discipline. More realistically, it can be

described as a multi-disciplinary study. Most of us accept this and are not worried by it. Many of us see this as an advantage, a characteristic of our field which frees us from traditional disciplines. Yet we know that to many of our academic colleagues outside of our area of interest we are associated with the "interdisciplinary stigma".

All this being the case, it is a wonder we survive. But it is worthwhile exploring this situation for opportunities. We know that our inter-disciplinary, or as many would prefer the term, multidisciplinary, nature is an asset: we are not tied down to established paths of thinking or problem solving but can draw as we see the opportunity from all or any. Many of the established older disciplines are now doing that - they are becoming multi-disciplinary: perhaps the stigma will blow away. Within my own College, some of the critics of the multi-disciplinary nature of the communication field have come from the "disciplines" of Education, English, and Administrative Studies, the critics apparently being blind to the multi-disciplinary nature of their own fields!

One challenge facing us all is to overcome the stereotyped image that communication has for many. It will not go away unless we help it. We must establish clearly that our work is not therapeutic in the sense that what we are trying to do is meant to be preventative rather than curative. We must "get through" to colleagues in other fields that we now see communication as <u>the reciprocal creation of meaning</u> and that communication education involves: 1) developing understanding and awareness of the factors influencing communication, and 2) developing competence in

communication. Further we must demonstrate that these twin goals are highly relevant to personal and occupational success in a society which is becoming increasingly complex and that they are distinct from the goals of other studies such as education, English, and organizational behaviour. I believe this can best be accomplished when we operate from separate Departments of Communication Studies.

2. Stereotyped views of communication educators - therapists, swingers and speech pansies

Perhaps the stereotype of the communication educator is not so clearcut as it is of the study of communication. Perhaps a stereotype does not exist. But the therapeutic image of the subject did not help because it led many to perceive that communication educator as an amateur therapist, keen to probe and pry into intimate personal details. This image was a threatening one and one which created problems which continue to linger. The T-group, encounter group movement helped some but is more widely known for its excessive, exaggerated versions of which are often exchanged. The image of something approaching a "touchy-feely" orgy is one that produced a "swingers" image for those who promoted these groups. Only one area of communication study remained for derision, the area that focused on debate and public speaking. Here the stereotype was equally unflattering, involving an image of some latter-day elocutionist, a sort of speech pansy who acted as an (unsuccessful) import agent doing his or her best to bring English drawing-room speech to the antipodes, where it was unwelcome.

Let us hope that these stereotypes are fading. The challenge here is for us to hasten the fading process. The best way to do this is to practise what we preach - effective relational communication. More than most, communication scholars need to mix and interact freely with their colleagues in other fields. Insularity will do nothing to break down the stereotypes; interactive example will. I will be suggesting later in the paper that assessed ability to interact interpersonally with other academics in ways likely to be perceived as competent should be high on the priorities when communication teaching staff are selected. There can be nothing worse for the image of communication educators than communicators who can't, or won't be bothered, communicating. The people who are chosen to work in the interpersonal field must be interactive scholars.

3. Developing and communicating an academically respectable theoretical framework - overcoming the one big drawback of experiential teaching methods

Most of us realize the contradictions inherent in an approach to teaching/learning which involves lecturing about communication and are aware of the learning advances that accrue when experiential or laboratory learning procedures are adopted. To many observers, academic colleagues and students, however, laboratory learning appears to lack rigour. The casual observer and the new student see classrooms with their furniture rearranged, informal learning situations, and engage in games, simulations, and structural workshop exercises, generally having "fun". Students apparently spend little time listening to the lecturer or group leader, and even less

taking notes. The conclusion that the study of communication is anti-academic and lacks rigour is inescapable for many because they do not witness the prior and follow-up reading and writing students engage in to supplement the experential activities. In the last 10-15 years considerable effort has been given to theory building and research. No single theory has engaged: our study is still healthily characterized by competing theoretical perspectives with individual theory construction centreing on such areas as communication style, communicative competence, perspective-taking, nonverbal behaviour and relational communication. All are being rigorously pursued by competent scholars. Each perspective has spawned a fertile research field. Publication of theory and research continurs at an ever increasing rate.

Despite the intensity and scope of this effort, little is known of it outside of the communication area. Even some scholars in related areas like administrative studies believe that communication died when the human relations school of organization structure waned some years ago: they, together with some managerial and organizational analysts seem unaware of the recent resurgence of effort in the area of communication competence. Even many who practice in the field of English are almost totally ignorant of any of the massive literature which has grown up in the field of interpersonal communication, other than that which relates to linguistics.

It would be easy to say simply that the reason for this must lie in poor communication and to argue that if so-called communication experts cannot communicate their views, theory, and research then they lack the

competence they claim to be able to enhance in others and deserve to drown somewhere in the intracacies of one of their own models. But it is not as simple as this. Our own analyses tell us that communication is reciprocal, it is two-way, and it involves the creation of meaning (in this case meaning about what we are on about). And we know that in certain situations great barriers can exist to the achievement of this process. In this situation, many of the barriers exist with the "listeners", those with whom we try to create the meaning of our field. Defense mechanisms lock us out and it is probable that many of these defences have their origins in the stereotypes mentioned earlier.

The challenge is to break down the barriers. While I am all for us talking to one another, as for example at this conference and through our Association, we must also talk to others. Not enough communication-oriented articles are published (or offered for publication) in journals founded in related fields and not enough communication-oriented papers are presented at conferences organized around related fields. If we want to legitimize the study of interpersonal communication among our peers in other disciplines we have to go out and tell them about it, remembering as we do the stereotypes some hold and that many are personally threatened by the study of an area in which they perceive their own knowledge and skill to be low.

4. <u>Initial re-action against communication education by some students - the "I'm already a competent communicator" syndrome</u>

Whilst it is usually overcome very quickly in interpersonal communication

courses, one of the problems we face is the student who believes that he or she knows it all already, or that what we have to offer is only superficial and ordinary common sense, and rejects what is offered on the grounds that it is already known and practised. A major factor contributing to this problem may be the use of the experimental laboratory exercises many of us value highly. They are designed to demonstrate vividly issues being raised and have the power to do this very effectively. But this very power, valued because of the learning it can promote, can also threaten some people. The threat arises from the fact that these exercises seem to "slow up" deficiencies in people who regard themselves as competent. They may be taken by a student to be a vehicle for demonstrating to them incompetencies they didn't know they had and don't believe they have.

The challenge in teaching is to ensure that this threat is eliminated or minimized. What is needed here is sensitive teaching and much thought and effort put into planning <u>how</u> to implement coursework as is put into <u>what</u> that coursework should be. There is a growing tendency, in these days of multiple internal course development committees, use of external course planning consultants, and assessment panels drawn from external sources, to focus almost exclusively on the <u>what</u> question, to produce paperwork about course structure and content to the satisfaction of other academics in order to have courses approved for introduction. This tendency is accompanied by another: the relegation of thought about delivery and teaching methodology to a very minor role. Whether a course "works" or not depends upon what happens at the point of delivery, not <u>just</u> upon an

elegant curriculum statement. It is time we again began to enquire into the tertiary teaching qualifications and/or experience of job applicants for communication teaching positions as well as their disciplinary expertise as evidenced by qualifications and publications. Another need, which is being met in some institutions but not others, is for in-house staff training schemes. One way or the other, evidence of interest and ability in teaching must be given more emphasis at times when decisions about appointment, tenure, and promotion are made. Sensitivity in teaching is doubly important in our field because we are attempting to increase awareness and understanding and highlight values, attitudes, and beliefs as well as transmit a body of knowledge. A sensitive teacher can lead students to understand that they are competent but that analysis of the factors involving interpersonal communication and skills training can lead to significant improvements in communication - to what I have called elsewhere "quality interpersonal communication". The challenge is to develop awareness, knowledge, and skill without offending the client.

5. Lack of articulation with other areas of communication study

The history of communication theory and research and the history of communication education which closely parallels it, is characterized both overseas and more recently in Australia by fragmentation. Perhaps fragmentation is the wrong word to describe the problem because it implies that something has existed as a whole and has subsequently been broken up. This is not the case with communication, the different aspects often being treated in isolation so that students of interpersonal communication study their field ignorant of the relationships between

that field and communication in groups, communication in organizations, and mass mediated communication. What is needed is articulation or linking of the study of all interrelated aspects of communication so that students see their work in interpersonal communication as part of a broader study.

Are the isolated contextual studies of communication capable of being related? Of course they are, although we may be put off this conclusion when we find large overseas universities and colleges, and more recently some of our own, separating those interested in mass communication from those interested in interpersonal communication, and these from those interested in other aspects of the study such as in organization or telecommunications.

Earlier in this essay a simple definition of communication was proposed: communication is the reciprocal construction of meaning. This definition is useful because it acts as a common denominator for communication in interpersonal, group, and organizational contexts. In each case communication is achieved when meaning is constructed in the minds of others and where knowledge of this meaning is reciprocal. For mass mediated settings, until recently, one word - the word "reciprocal" - had to be omitted from this definition if it was to be applied there, but with that omission, a view of communication as the construction of meaning applied equally well in the mass context. With advances in technology which now pose the potential to make mass audiences active through giving them greater choice in what they receive, in providing

them with means of giving instant feedback, and in making mass channels more accessible to all, or, at least many, it may not be long before an argument can be sustained for including "reciprocal" in a definition of communication applicable in all contexts.

Clearly the creation of meaning is a common thread upon which articulation can occur. Associated with it is the notion of competence in communication as an objective in communication study. To date, the notion of communication competence has been applied principally in the area of interpersonal communication, where it has been distinguished from linguistic competence (the set of principles necessary to operate with language) and accepted to mean the ability to select and practice from a repertoire of communication skills, those appropriate to a particular interaction. Most of the research in communication competence to date has been carried out in the interpersonal area. Yet the same notion is equally applicable in relation to the small group and to the organization, where much of judged competence depends on ability to select and practice appropriate behaviours in interactions. The nature of the interactions may differ but the principle of selection and practice of appropriate behaviours is similar as, indeed, are many of the behaviours (eg. perspective talking, active and empathic listening, appropriate term-taking, behavioural flexibility). It will not take much imagination on someone's part to apply the same notion to mass mediated communication. Competence in analysing the media, its contents, audiences, and effects as well as competence in its use is already the implied theme of many Australian efforts in the field of mass media education. There are many parallels with the interpersonal field.

In addition to the integrating themes of meaning - centredness and communication competence, communication educators might look to the challenge of thoroughly canvassing the whole field of human communication in an effort to identify concepts which might be called unifying concepts. What is envisaged is concepts or constructs that have validity across the whole field and are not communication-context restricted. Three examples will suffice here. The "gatekeeper" notion, introduced in the field of mass media analysis, has proven a very useful notion in that field if the frequency with which it arises is any criterion. It is occasionally used elsewhere, yet it has considerable potential for explaining behaviour in interpersonal, group, and organization settings. A second example is provided by the notion of "communication apprehension" which has received widespread attention in interpersonal settings and to a lesser extent in group research. No effort has been yet made to follow through its application in organizations, where intuition must tell us that there are hypotheses worth testing. A final example will demonstrate another avenue for this suggested exploration of concepts: group and organizational communication theorists have had a good deal to say about power as a factor in human communication. While interpersonal communication theorists haven't ignored it altogether (eg. by looking at dominance/submission) they have given it relatively minor attention as journal and text book indexes quickly reveal. This is surprising when one considers the possible effects of power and powerlessness in face-to-face intimate and work relationships.

There certainly exists here a challenge for communication educators, although it is a challenge that will have to be overcome the hurdles

imposed by personal specializations in one area or another. A result of the challenge being taken up will be the appearance, in increasing numbers, of sequences of courses (majors or disciplinary sequences) which range across the whole field of communications. Such sequences will not lead to professional qualifications in communication but will provide worthwhile "support" majors for interested students and provide sound bases for post graduate work. Their "bitsy" nature can be overcome by planning centred around common concepts and themes and through the inclusion as a final course in the sequence, a capstone course in theory construction and analysis which, apart from developing a theory perspective, will provide a further common link.

6. Domination of the United States as a Source of Teaching Resources - Uncle Sam will show them

Largely because the United States has been the homeland of most of the structured workshop or laboratory exercises in interpersonal communication and of introductory texts and readers in the field, and partly because of the structure of textbook marketing and accessibility in Australia, material sourced in the United States dominates in Australian courses in interpersonal communication. There is nothing terribly wrong with this because that country is where most of the thinking has occurred in this field and these materials reflect this and make it available in a readily available form to Australian lecturers and trainers.

This ready availability, however, is also a source of problems. Much of the material is culture-specific. Language used in examples and many of

the situational contexts of exercises are related to the United States and do not transfer readily to Australia. This is even more obvious with non-print than with print materials. Some of these materials have been validated for use in the United States: to the knowledge of the writer none have been validated in Australia. It is possible that we are using materials that are appropriate in their country of origin but not in Australia. Recent United States interest, for example, in assertiveness training has led to the production of numerous training materials. We have yet to see evidence that they are appropriate for use in this country, yet they are being used here.

In the short-run, the challenge here is to modify and adapt the materials, trialling them with our own students, rejecting those that are inappropriate and accepting those for which we find a use. In the longer run, the challenge is for us to develop our own materials suitable for Australian contexts. Those of us who have worked on this task to produce a handful of "local" exercises know the immense amount of time that is likely to be involved in a larger project. The size of the task is daunting, yet it is an important one.

I would like to suggest that this might be one avenue of activity that Australian Communication Association might engage itself in as a national curriculum project. An energetic member might undertake to gather, through the Association from its members, and from other sources, examples of Australian developed exercises and make them available in an Association sponsored Handbook of Interpersonal Communication Exercises.

Alternatively, the Association might consider sponsoring a person in a quest for funding to engage in this activity on a full time basis for, say, one year, collating the work of others and developing a new set of original materials.

PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH ADMINISTRATION

Problems in teaching are problems over which we have a reasonable level of control. They are "our" problems in that they are highly visible to us even if they are not always apparent to our colleagues in other disciplines. As well, their challenges are our challenges and the means to their solution is in our hands.

Beyond the problems associated with teaching, however, is another set of problems over which we have far less control. These problems are associated with the administration of departments of communication in the tertiary institutions, the development of which began in the early and mid 1970's but stalled with funding cutbacks. Again they pose challenges and opportunities.

1. Program Development Against a Backdrop of Budget Cuts

It is unfortunate that the move to establish separate departments of communication studies had barely gained momentum when the first winds of the budget restrictions now with us were felt. Had the movement towards communication begun five years earlier in Australia, the problems we now experience would be less extensive, although they would still be with us.

The major costs associated with program development in the interpersonal communication field and the associated fields of group and organizational communication relate to salaries and library resources. When mass media studies are also involved in a program, the additional costs of equipping and operating a studio must also be added, although these might be quite small if the studio is used extensively for other purposes so that courses in media are responsible only for the share of equipment, software, and salaries they use.

It is easy for some of us to be unaware of the full extent of salary costs. Apart from the apparent cost, the salary agreed to at appointment, a number of other"hidden costs"are involved. These include "incremental creep", the increments automatically built into any appointment given satisfactory service, and what accountants call "on-costs", the cost of worker's compensation insurance, holiday pay loadings, payroll tax, sick leave entitlements, and study leave allowances, superannuation benefits and long service leave entitlements where they apply. These add significantly to totals which are taken into account when we put forward proposals to hire the extra staff needed to develop programs.

Most of us work in institutions where proposals to introduce new courses or sequences involve internal checks on the extent of backing available from our libraries. In addition, outside accreditation agencies make similar checks before programs are approved. As cutbacks take place in allocations for expenditure upon library resources, this creates additonal problems for the administrator seeking to guarantee an adequate resource

backing for the courses they propose. For example: starting from scratch in 1975 with a library which then had no holdings in the field of communication, we have been fortunate enough at Kuring-gai C.A.E. to be able to spend approximately $40,000 on communication references, including non-book materials. The money to finance this has largely been granted by the new and developing Schools serviced by Communication Studies and was possible because of savings made when staff appointments below profile were made. The cost of resource development has been staffing positions being made available at levels lower than the College staffing profile allowed. $40,000 may seem a large sum at first glance. However, with enrolments in the first year undergraduate interpersonal course running currently at 550 and with the cost of reference books now averaging over $15, it is clear that the total is still not adequate to support a full program, although an excellent start has been made. Again, however, the point is that the cost of establishing adequate resource collections is a vital consideration in our efforts to develop programs. The moneys required are increasingly difficult to obtain in times of resource constraint.

The challenges associated with this problem are apparent. The solutions do not come so readily to hand. What we must continue to do is to bring to the attention of university and college administrators the major developments in theory, research, and practice in our fields and to continue to put forward the strongest possible arguments in favour of our bids for resources. We will have to continue to be parties to the appointment of increased proportions of part-time teaching staff and

study carefully the advantages to be gained between resource trade-offs. As ceilings are placed upon total resources available, greater care must be taken in optimum use of what is available. Clearly, that is the objective of system-wide cut-backs. If we won't play the game according to those rules our programs will suffer. But it is a game in which the welfare of people must remain uppermost in consideration. That dilemma is not easily resolved.

2. The "More Scholar Per Dollar" call and staff morale

Associated with the general budgetary squeeze, the effects of which are summarized above, is the "people problem" resulting from the present difficult situation. The general outcome of the pressures that are being applied with respect to staffing is a call for "more scholar per dollar", a call which I believe is being met in some institutions in ways that adversely affect the morale of many staff and in ways which must also adversely affect the programs they are engaged to help plan and deliver. We are all aware of the current difficulties in gaining promotions that would have been almost automatic a few years ago, the difficulty for many of gaining tenure and the associated right to study leave, and the restrictions that are now placed upon the use of study leave to gain additional qualifications. Departmental heads are aware of these problems and the effects they have on the delivery of courses and must live with them but they have very limited power to do anything immediately constructive about them. They are system-wide problems.

One problem here that might be able to be attacked in a useful way is that concerning study-leave entitlement of non-tenured staff. I think

that it would be reasonable for us to argue that study leave be made available on the usual basis, subject to satisfaction of contractual obligations, to non-tenured staff whose contracts were being renewed after three years of employment. An alternative would be arrangement among interested people to exchange positions and gain work experience at another institution for, say, 6 months. This would benefit the persons concerned and the institutions and could operate for exchanges among Australian tertiary institutions, between industry and tertiary institutions and between Australian and overseas institutions. I would see the onus being upon the individuals to locate and arrange appropriate exchanges, but within Australia the Association's newsletter could readily be used as a clearinghouse to help with this process. Such a scheme would cost very little, would act as an incentive, and be morale boosting at a time when all these advantages are in demand.

3. Development of Australian and overseas information networks

Until recently, the networks which existed among Australian academics in the human communication field and between them and their overseas counterparts were poorly developed. Effective contact and information networks are, however, essential to the health of any field of enquiry and immediate attention should be given to this issue.

The Association has made a good start. Through its conferences such as this one and through Australian Scan, which has achieved respectability in a short span of time largely as a result of Rod Miller and his editorial panel, Australians in the field are coming to know one another

and to extend these acquaintances informally. The appearance of the Newsletter from Bill Crocker and Bonnie Francis has also been a welcome newcomer. Recently when a new edition arrived at Kuring-gai, one of my colleagues declared that his reading of it and some potential contacts it gave him were the "high point of his day". Let's never underestimate the value of Newsletters which supplement journals through the time and content flexibility they possess. Of course, both journal and newsletters depend on contributions by members and members must accept their responsibility in this regard. A communication association must communicate! It has been said that, when faced with the "publish or perish" choice many make the wrong decision. But publication makes knowledge public and is one of the cornerstones of academic life. It must be further encouraged within Australia.

We also need overseas contacts and need to "plug in" to the well established overseas network. Contacts made on staff development leave are vital in this respect, and the Newsletter makes it possible for us to share contacts who might be doing work of interest to other members of the Association. The use of Jerry Frye, a U.S. expert in non-verbal communication, as guest editor of Australian Sean for an international issue in that field, was also a step in that direction thanks again to Rod Miller. The Association must also continue to have prominent overseas academics serve as guest speakers and resource persons at its annual conferences and seek funds to make this possible.

Some institutions are bringing their own staff into contact with overseas specialists through Visiting Fellowship schemes. At Kuring-gai, for

example, we keep one establishment position in the Department open for the on-going appointment of International Visiting Fellows, who are engaged on one-year contracts according to skills they can offer at a particular stage of our program development. Through team teaching, curriculum committees, joint research, and staff colloquia, as well as informally, they have considerable contact with existing staff and open up a range of overseas contacts. Similar schemes exist elsewhere and I think time will show an expansion in their use.

In addition to these networks, we should be encouraging greater interaction between those working in tertiary institutions and those working in training and industry. Such networks are developing and will be encouraged further as communication research, which must use a relevant industry base if it is to be meaningful, gains momentum in Australia and as the extent of consulting activities increases when those in training and industry become more aware of the advances in the field made in tertiary institutions in recent years. The offering of short industry-oriented extension courses will facilitate this awareness.

CONCLUSION

The development of interpersonal communication programs in Australia is occurring in times of difficulty for academic institutions. Because of these difficulties, and because of difficulties inherent in the nature of communication study, numerous problems face those currently engaged in the field. A number of these problems, those associated with stereotypical views of communication and communication educators, the development of a

respectable theoretical framework for theory building and research, initial reaction against interpersonal communication by some students, and lack of articulation with other areas of communication study, and domination of teaching resources by U. . sources, are concerned with teaching. Others, those associated with program development against a backdrop of budget cuts, the issue of declining staff morale, and the development of local and international information networks are concerned with administration.

In both areas the problems explicated offer challenges to those engaged in the field of communication. In all cases, it has been argued, the challenge lies in attempting to find opportunities within the problem for its own solution or alleviation. These opportunities are more apparent in the problems relating to teaching than they are in the problems relating to administration, largely because the solutions to the former set of problems are within the direct control of communication educators while solutions to the latter set of problems, which all involve the issues involved in financial constraints, are largely in the hands of others. The challenge here is to bring them in appropriate ways to the attention of those who make budgetary decisions so that our views are taken into account at the time those judgements are made.